

to temptation and risk by sensual excitement, holding themselves innocent if they were not criminal.¹ These tricks of the human mind upon itself are familiar now in the history of scores of sects, and in the phenomena of revivalism. Ritual asceticism is consistent with sensual indulgence. The sophistry necessary to reconcile the two is easily spun.

688. Asceticism in Islam. Islam, at the beginning, had an ascetic tendency, which it soon lost. Mohammed and his comrades practiced night watches with prayer.² Jackson found in the modern Yezidi community a "sort of ascetic order of women," *fakiriah*, corresponding to fakirs amongst men.* The dervishes are the technically religious Moslems, and in the history of Islam there have been frequent temporary appearances of sects and groups which regarded pain as meritorious.

689. Virginity. Virginity is negative and may be a renunciation. It then falls in with the ascetic way of thinking, and the notion that virginity, as renunciation, is meritorious is a prompt deduction. Christian ecclesiastics made this deduction and pushed it to great extremes. The renunciation was thought to be more meritorious if practiced in the face of opportunity and temptation. The ascetics therefore created opportunity in order to put themselves in the midst of the war of sense and duty.⁴

690. Mediaeval asceticism. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the ascetic temper underwent a revival which was like an intellectual storm. It was nourished by reading the church fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries. It entered into mediaeval mores. It was in the popular taste, and the church encouraged and developed it. It was connected with demonism and

fetichism which had taken possession of the Christian church in the ninth and tenth centuries. Relics were fetiches. The Holy Sepulcher and the Holy Land were fetiches; that is, they were

691. Such perversions have been very frequent. See Todd, *Life of St. Patrick*, 91, for a case; also, Lea, *Inquisition*, III, 109. Sometimes the test was to show that the temptation was powerless. Lea, *Inquis.*, II, 357 ; *Sacerd. Celib.*, 167.

692. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, III, 210.
⁸ *Hist. of Religions*, section of the *Amer. Orient. Soc.*, VII, 22.
⁴ Achelis, *Virgines Subintroductae*. The author thinks that the relationship was one of Platonic comradeship.